CHAPTER III.

WORK IN OFFICE ETC.—II.

Delegation orders.

On taking over a new charge make your office put up the Delegation orders [*vide* Land Revenue Rules, Chapter II (VI)] which show which of the duties of a Collector under the Land Revenue Code have been reserved by the Collector and not delegated to the Assistant Collector. You must know this before you start your duties.

Ignorance.

Never be unwilling to ask questions on any matters of which you are ignorant, whether from your superior officers, or from subordinates, or from the public. If you pretend knowledge, which you have not, of rules and regulations, your subordinates will certainly spot it at once, and it is better to admit that you do not know, and to see if *they* know; but verify afterwards the information they give you. Subordinates such as Village Officers, Circle Inspectors, Mamlatdars and your own clerks, when efficient, can teach a young officer far more than he can learn from codes, hand-books or Government Resolutions.

Control of office.

Never delude yourself with the idea that once you have passed an order, the matter is finished. You have to ensure that the order is carried out. In criminal cases, of course, there is a routine laid down by law and by rule, which prevents an accused sentenced to an year's imprisonment just walking out of court and escaping punishment; but in ordinary Revenue work there exists no such guarantee. After you have signed an order, it will *not* automatically be carried into effect. If it is an order concerning a village, it will be passed on to the Mamlatdar who will probably be on tour, and

the papers will be dealt with by the Aval-Karkun. He will merely initial it for the Jababi Karkun without giving any further instructions. The Karkun is quite possibly a new man, who, not knowing what to do, will scratch his head over your order and then put it at the bottom of his pile of correspondences. The Aval-Karkun will forget, or be too slack, to take his weekly check of the Karkun's daftars, and the case will lie as it was received, till the Mamlatdar holds his monthly inspection. He will then issue instructions how the order is to be carried out, and the Jababi Karkun will send it to the Circle Inspector. The Circle Inspector will see that it looks a troublesome case, and will decide that it may just as well wait till he visits the village, and he will put it in his bundle of correspondences for that village—which he may forget to take with him when he goes there. Even when the Circle Inspector and the papers are together in the village, the village officers may be absent, or the parties concerned not be present, or if present, they may trump up some excuse for delay.

On these lines—which are not exaggerated—it may easily be months before your order is carried into effect, or if influence, local or pecuniary, be brought to bear, the case papers may be entirely lost! It is therefore absolutely necessary, whenever you discover such a case, to take prompt disciplinary action against the official concerned.

"If a Mamlatdar believes from what he knows of the character and habits of an Assistant that after the issue of an order the Assistant will satisfy himself that it has been properly carried out, this will make him far more careful and zealous than the mere receipt of a dozen strongly worded letters." (Nairne.)

For this reason your office must keep up-to-date the Control Registers (*see* Breviary, paragraph 70) of all orders and correspondences sent to Mamlatdars and you must check these when you inspect their offices. It is a good thing also to keep a note in your pocket book of some of the more important, intricate or interesting cases, which you have sent out to the Mamlatdars, and whenever you get an opportunity, ask the Mamlatdar how they are getting on and trace them in the Taluka.

Equally it is necessary that the Mamlatdar's office should keep a Control Register of all cases sent to the Circle Inspectors and to all Village officers. It is not the Mamlatdar's duty to see to this office routine himself, but it is the job of the Aval-karkun, and you should remorselessly insist that he personally checks these registers once a week. If he fails to do it twice, ask the Collector to put some one else in his place. For an Aval-karkun should be an officer being tested for fitness to become eventually a Mamlatdar, and if he cannot control the half a dozen clerks in his office and get work out of them, he will never be able to control a Taluka.

Office papers.

You will probably find in your own office that correspondences which have been going on for any length of time, are unwieldy masses of tattered and illegible papers. In the case of vernacular correspondences which are carried on in original from village officer to Taluka and to and from the Assistant Collector's office backwards and forwards, this is difficult to avoid owing to the continual rough handling the papers receive. Insist however that these papers are kept flat, properly laced together and given protecting

covers when necessary. (Breviary, paragraph 17.) Their illegibility, the result of writing the vernacular with a steel nib instead of a reed pen, and of neglect to teach decent handwriting in schools, is less easy to deal with. But you should insist, that from the time you take charge, all clerks and talatis must write legibly for the future.

Notes prepared by your own office should be neatly written on proper sheets of foolscap, without attaching small scraps of paper, or writing diagonal or vertical marginal remarks. See that your office follows the instructions in paragraph 23 of the Breviary and removes regularly from the files all superfluous matter, such as notes asking the office to put up papers, rough calculations, duplicates, etc.

When you issue a letter in English, *always* take a carbon copy for the office copy on your file *and* remove from the file the rough draft with its numerous illegible corrections and destroy it at once. Should there be any important note in the rough draft, have that typed out and put in on a separate sheet.

If you have not in your office a sufficient supply of file boards (wrappers with flaps and strings) in which all correspondence can be tied and put up tidily for your orders, indent for some more. You may have to indent two or three times, but the convenience of despatch resulting from the use of these file boards is worth the trouble.

Letters. In drafting English letters aim only at clarity, particularly avoiding sarcasm and/or humour. Sarcasm is unfair towards your subordinates, who cannot effectively reply to you, and unwise towards a superior,

who may reply too effectively. In the same way humour is out of place in Government correspondence, as the letters will probably be read by various officers, some of whom will certainly have no sense of humour, and others may have insufficient knowledge of the English language to recognise your wit.

Do not be in a hurry to take offence at any letters you may receive from others which appear to you offensive. Remember that most of your correspondents are not writing in their own tongue and have learnt English from teachers who have not a very great knowledge of the language which they teach. Often what may seem to you a rude effusion may be merely due to ignorance of the English idiom and in no way impertinently intended.

Confidential papers should always be received, and sent out, in two covers (envelopes), an inner sealed one marked "confidential" or "secret" as the case may be and an outer one not so marked to protect the seals and to prevent the confidential papers being opened by accident along with the other post. Confidential Papers.

Make it a definite rule that when your Sheristedar opens the post, he should not open *any* confidential letters. You must open all these yourself.

"Confidential may be distinguished into—

(*i*) not to be published or communicated outside the office (*see* Official Secrets Act and the Law of Libel);

(*ii*) strictly secret, and not to go into the office at all."

(Breviary, paragraph 44.)

For instance various Government Resolutions are confidential, but yet the contents obviously must be communicated to your Sheristedar who is running your office, and in some cases to clerks and others as well.

On taking over charge ask the Sheristedar to let you see all confidential files that are with him so that you can get an idea of what confidential matters he is dealing with. But do not necessarily follow the same practice as was followed before you took over. Your predecessor may have been inclined to leave too much confidential work to the Sheristedar, and you must use your judgment as to what should be kept in your own custody. In case of doubt it is better to err on the side of safety and keep the papers with you.

Any papers marked "Secret" *must* be kept in your own custody and not shown to any of the office staff. They should of course never be filed in your office, but should be kept in your own confidential box.

Confidential reports on clerks and talatis also should not go to the office, but should be kept in your own custody.

You may quite possibly find on taking over that your confidential box is full of papers ill-arranged and on all sorts of subjects. It will be a laborious task arranging these, but it will save you a lot of trouble in the long run, if you sort out these papers and file them as soon you can. But you must do this yourself without help of your Sheristedar or clerks. The Breviary, paragraph 44, gives instructions for filing confidential papers.

The annual confidential reports on the Circle Inspectors and on the clerks in Mamlatdars' offices will go through you from the Mamlatdars to the Collector and you should add to them any remarks you can. Therefore take particular care in examining a Mamlatdar's office to note good work or bad work by any clerk, and when you get a particularly good, or a particularly bad, case sent up from the Taluka, enquire which clerk is responsible. Keep a note book in which to enter all such cases deserving praise or blame, so that when the time comes for writing the confidentials you will not have forgotten whether it was B. A. Kulkarni or B. C. Kulkarni, who had made such a mess of the Navegaon Ramoshi Watan Case. Confidential Reports.

If you find among the clerks in the Mamlatdar's office a promising young man who is likely to be fit for promotion to the upper division, get the Collector to post him as one of your Circle Inspectors, and then train him as much as you can in practical out-door village work. Quite a number of young Aval-karkuns and Mamlatdars are town bred and are at first lacking in any actual experience of life in the villages. Let it be understood that for a young man to be posted as Circle Inspector is an indication of possible promotion, and not a mark of inefficiency as a clerk.

You will have to keep a confidential record of Talatis. You can do in whatever way you wish, but in many ways the most convenient method is to have a printed form giving the heads under which the Mamlatdar's remarks are to be made, and each year a new form will be filled in for each Talati. These sheets are then filed in a separate folder for each Talati, and the

folders arranged alphabetically according to Talatis' names thus making a self-indexing file. Each folder will contain a sheet for each year of the Talati's service after the system was introduced. Though your confidential record will thus with time come to be bulky, yet this is preferable to the alternative method of having a single sheet for each man, which is kept in the Assistant Collector's office and sent annually to the Mamlatdar to return with his remarks for the year. The latter system has disadvantages, e.g. :—

first, that the Mamlatdar may be prejudiced by reading previous good or bad remarks about the Talati,

secondly, if the Talati or one of his friends happens to see the sheet in the Taluka Office, all the previous confidential cats are out of their bags,

thirdly, the sheet does not give space for the various headings under which report must be made, if you are to extract something more than jejune praise or blame from an over-worked Mamlatdar,

fourthly, a Mamlatdar is sometimes nervous of putting down his own opinion, when he knows that it will be shown for years to come to all his successors, and possibly to the individual Talati himself.

Appendix B gives a suggested form of annual confidential sheet for Talatis.

Communication of adverse reports.

Look up Government Resolution, General Department, No. 9199 of 29th November 1915, under which unfavourable confidential reports have to be communicated to the officer reported on.

This does not mean that every unfavourable remark by a Mamlatdar on a Talati must be communicated to him. The Talati should not be informed—

(*a*) when you do not agree with the Mamlatdar's unfavourable opinion,

(*b*) when the defect mentioned is one which cannot be remedied, e.g. lack of ability or intelligence,

(*c*) when you suspend judgment and think that a further report should be awaited before deciding on the Talati's conduct.

In effect you will tell a Talati that he has been reported on badly, when his conduct has been such as is likely to be improved by a warning, and the warning should be conveyed in the way most likely to lead to the improvement desired. Usually it will be best to call up the Talati and personally tell him that you have found him, or that he is reported to be, lazy, inaccurate or whatever it is, and that he must do better in future. Enter on his confidential report that you have communicated the substance of the report to him orally.

This of course will not meet obstinate cases, where a written warning sent through the Mamlatdar may be needed to stir up the offender. But such Talatis are better got rid of if possible.

Confidential reports on Clerks and Circle Inspectors go to the Collector who will decide whether to communicate any criticisms made by the Mamlatdar or the Assistant Collector.

Village officers who are Watandars will be appointed by you under the Watan Act, but Talatis, i.e. Appointment of Talatis,

stipendiary village accountants, will be appointed by you in your discretion subject to the rules laid down by Government as to age, educational qualifications, proportion of various castes, etc. You should keep your own list of candidates educationally and otherwise qualified for the post of Talati, and insist that the Mamlatdars appoint persons from *your* list of candidates for temporary vacancies, and not from among the friends and relations of local officials and gentry. One of the latter class, who has worked for some time as a candidate, always has a grievance when his claims to appointment are disregarded in favour of a man from the Assistant Collector's list of candidates. To avoid this, see that only those in your list are appointed.

How you will choose your candidates from among those qualified depends on yourself unless the Collector has laid down any particular rules. A personal interview and some kind of written test to ensure a good handwriting and possibly a modicum of common sense are obvious factors. The orders of Government regarding selecting Revenue Clerks given in Government Circular, Revenue Department, No. 5156/33 of 23rd February 1937 should be seen.

Punishment of Talatis and Peons.

You are able to dismiss and otherwise punish any official whom you appoint yourself, i.e. in effect your Talatis and peons, but before any punishment of dismissal, removal or reduction is imposed, proper departmental proceedings must be undertaken in accordance with the Bombay Civil Services Conduct, Discipline and Appeal Rules, paragraph 55, page 13, and Government Resolution, Political and Reforms Department, No. 1352/33 (Fin.) of 5th October 1936.

Such an enquiry has in practice to be conducted with as much care and formality as—if not with more than—a criminal trial. Otherwise, on appeal, your order will certainly be reversed for non-observance of the rules. Of course if a Talati has been convicted in a criminal court, e.g. for embezzlement of Government revenue, no departmental proceedings are necessary before his dismissal.

Punishment of Patels.

"Upon complaints against Patels the Assistant Collector is in a strait between two dangers that of encouraging Village Officers to neglect their duty, and that of encouraging departmental subordinates, many of whom are or should be inferior to the Patel in social estimation, to be rude and exacting. On the one hand, the Government work must be done and Government servants accorded civility and all proper help. On the other, it is a public concern that the Patel should not be unduly belittled. The petty official who, out of spite at some non-recognition of his own importance, tries to get the Patel into trouble, and the Patel who will not best or himself to do his duty, are both of them not unknown. When discipline requires punishment regard may be had to the class to which the man belongs. There are many stipendiary and low-caste Patels who are not very sensitive, and can only be reached through their pocket; yet even here a heavy fine should not be inflicted, without thought, on a man who may already be in debt to the Bunia. To a Patel of good social position the sting of a small fine lies in the humiliation of it and of the triumph of the complainant. This lowers his authority, by which Government loses as much as he does. For such men it may sometimes be wise to simply enter the first two

or three faults in a register and then for repeated neglect or contumacy to suspend for a short period."

Do not forget to recognise good work among your Village Officers by the presentation of pagris or certificates, at Jamabandi, and particularly do not forget that some Village servants and watchmen should also be thus publicly rewarded at the same time. Patils and Village servants greatly appreciate the award of a sword for good work. There are often several passable swords that have lapsed to Government available in Head Quarters or Taluka Police Offices, one of which can be so presented. If you find your grant for this is insufficient, ask the Collector if he can let you have a little more money, as this public recognition of services is most useful for the administration.

Peons. Though EHA describes the peon as an unequalled child's nurse, remember that he is primarily a Government servant, and that what work he does for you beyond his official duties of "remaining present", announcing visitors, fetching the post, keeping your office tidy, etc., is in the nature of overtime and requires remuneration as such. It is customary therefor to give each of your peons a couple of rupees or so a month, and, if they do any special job for you, e.g. clean your guns, or attend to your car, a larger amount. As a class, peons are extremely capable and extremely willing, but they, as others, like to magnify their own importance, e.g. they may demand tips from visitors or extract fees from ignorant petitioners for their pretended influence over the officer. Therefore peons should be kept in their place and not made confidential servants,

The Assistant Collector makes the appointments of peons in Taluka offices. There are Government orders that members of the depressed classes *must* be given preference for peons appointments, until a minimum proportion of 10 per cent. of these classes is reached among the peons. You must see that these orders are carried out. There is still some prejudice against the presence of depressed class peons in offices, and especially against their use as personal peon to an official of higher caste, and therefore difficulty in securing suitable depressed class candidates is sometimes put forward as an excuse for non-compliance with Government orders.

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